

Claims

1. A vacuum cleaner comprising:  
a floor-engaging portion having a first air inlet on the underside thereof;  
an upright portion pivotally connected at its lower end to said floor-engaging portion;  
a handle upstanding from the upper end of said upright portion and having a first end and a second end, said first end of the handle being detachably engaged with a formation on said upright portion;  
a rigid tubular duct extending along the handle between a second air inlet at said first end thereof and an outlet disposed remote from said first end; and  
an elongate flexible hose having a first end and a second end, the first end of the hose being connected to said outlet on said handle, wherein the cross-sectional area of the rigid tubular duct extending along the handle increases substantially from said second air inlet at said first end of the handle towards said outlet disposed remote from said first end of said handle, the rigid tubular duct having, at said first end of the handle, an elongate portion which has either a transverse dimension or a cross-sectional area which is substantially uniform over its length.
2. A vacuum cleaner as claimed in claim 1, in which the cross-sectional area of said duct in said elongate portion at said first end of the handle is 40-60% less than the cross-sectional area of said duct adjacent said outlet.
3. A vacuum cleaner as claimed in claim 1 or 2, in which said duct in said elongate portion at said first end of the handle has a dimension, along a major transverse axis of said duct, which is at least 40% greater than the dimension along

a minor transverse axis which extends perpendicular to said major transverse axis.

4. A vacuum cleaner as claimed in claim 3, in which said major transverse axis extends between the front and rear of the cleaner when said handle is engaged with said upright portion of the cleaner.

5. A vacuum cleaner as claimed in any preceding claim, in which said duct adjacent said outlet is substantially circular in section.

10 6. A vacuum cleaner as claimed in any preceding claim, in which said formation on the upright portion of the cleaner comprises a socket arranged to receive said elongate portion at said first end of the said handle.

7. A vacuum cleaner as claimed in any preceding claim, further comprising a valve having a first inlet port connected to said first air inlet of the cleaner, a second inlet port connected to the second end of said elongate flexible hose, an outlet port connected to a dust separation device, and means for selectively connecting said outlet port to either said first or second inlet ports.

8. A vacuum cleaner as claimed in claim 7, in which said valve comprises an actuator for causing the valve to connect said outlet port to said second air inlet of the cleaner when the handle is removed from the upright portion of the cleaner, said actuator causing the valve to connect said outlet port to said first air inlet of the cleaner when the handle is engaged with said upright portion of the cleaner.

9. A vacuum cleaner as claimed in any preceding claim, in which a catch is provided to retain the handle in engagement with said upright portion of the cleaner, against a resilient bias.

5 10. A vacuum cleaner as claimed in claim 9 when appended to claim 7 or 8, in which said valve is actuated, upon release of said catch, to divert suction from said first air inlet of the cleaner to said second air inlet of the cleaner.

11. A vacuum cleaner as claimed in any preceding claim, in  
10 which said handle comprises an elongate tubular structure which is closed at said second end of the handle.

12. A vacuum cleaner as claimed in claim 11, in which said tubular structure is shaped to provide a hand grip to be grasped by the user.

15 13. A vacuum cleaner as claimed in claim 1 and substantially as herein described with reference to the accompanying drawings.